THE LIBRARY
The University of British Columbia
Acc No.

Commission of Conservation
CANADA

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HEALTH

Housing and Town Planning in Canada

By
THOMAS ADAMS
Town Planning Adviser, Commission of Conservation

Reprinted from the Sixth Annual Report of the
Commission of Conservation

OTTAWA—1915

Housing and Town Planning in Canada

MR. CHAIRMAN, ladies and gentlemen : The subject of town planning is a very wide one and Canada is a very large country, so that I am afraid I shall have to take up a considerable portion of your time this morning in dealing with this matter, especially as we have just extended the work of the Commission in connection with housing and town planning. The question has been dealt with at previous annual meetings by Dr. Chas. A. Hodgetts, Medical Adviser to the Commission, in connection with public health work. Dr. Hodgetts, as you know, is absent in Europe and I shall have to try to cover in the report which I have to present to you the report of the work during the whole of the past year, as well as to indicate as far as I can the work we contemplate doing in the future.

Summary of Work

In the first place it seems appropriate to review and summarize the references to town planning and housing which were made at previous annual meetings of the Commission.

The matter seems to have been considered for the first time in the paper on "Unsanitary Housing," submitted by Dr. Hodgetts, in 1911. He drew attention to the existence of slum conditions in Quebec, Ontario, and Manitoba, to difficulties in housing the foreign immigrant population, and to the inadequacy of health laws. Town planning was advocated on the lines of Part II of the British Housing and Town Planning Act of 1909.

In the report of Dr. Hodgetts, submitted in January, 1912, the need for housing legislation was referred to, and attention was drawn to errors in Canadian town planning, or rather to the absence of town planning.

Dr. Hodgetts summarized the town planning and housing activities in Canada up to 1912, as follows :

Passing of Winnipeg Tenement House by-law in 1909.
Appointment of the first Winnipeg Town Planning Commission.
Passing of the Housing by-law in Toronto.

Work of Toronto Civic Guild and Montreal Civic Improvement League.
Appointment of Parks Commission of Montreal.
Planning of Prince Rupert and Port Mann.
Work of Ottawa Improvement Commission.

In 1913, progress was reported in many of the provinces of Canada. Ontario, Manitoba, and Alberta had revised their Public Health Acts. Town Planning Acts, based on the British Act, had been passed by the Provincial Legislatures of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. The "City and Suburbs Plans Act" was passed by the Ontario Government for cities over 50,000 in population.

Nova Scotia and Saskatchewan had passed Acts to regulate the erection of tenement houses.

Housing and Town Planning Conferences had been held at Winnipeg and Berlin (Ontario), at which committees were formed, having for their object the formation of a Canadian "Housing and Town Planning Association." It was also advocated that the Commission should call a national congress to discuss the subject.

At the meeting in 1914, Mr. G. Frank Beer read a paper pleading for a City Planning Organization. He drew attention to the desirability of emphasizing the economic rather than the æsthetic side of town planning, and suggested that the Commission should call a Housing and Town Planning Conference each year. He also referred in another paper to the work of the Toronto Housing Company.

The late Lieut.-Col. Jeffrey H. Burland reported on the work done by the committee on town planning legislation. On behalf of the committee he reported that the public were in need of education on the subject, and that the Commission should take steps to make known the practical and economic importance of modern town planning. He referred to the need for a "Department of Municipal Affairs" in each province, under which there should be a Town Planning and Housing Board.

The report of the 1914 meeting contains records of the passing of the following Acts*:

Quebec—Act to Assist in the Construction of Dwelling Houses in Cities, Towns and Villages.
Ontario—Act to Encourage Housing Accommodation in Cities and Towns.
Alberta—Act Relating to Town Planning.

---

*See Appendices, *Fifth Annual Report*, Commission of Conservation.

Dr. Hodgetts reported on town planning conferences as follows: National Town Planning Conference, Chicago, May, 1913; Massachusetts Town Planning Conference, Boston, November, 1913. He also referred to the International Conference on Town Planning at Toronto in May, 1914, which was then being planned, and to the desirability of forming a Canadian Town Planning and Housing Association.

Growing Interest in Town Planning

The above outline indicates the growing interest in town planning and housing throughout the Dominion and the tendency of public opinion in a direction favourable to effective town planning legislation. There has not been much practical accomplishment, but that could hardly be expected in so short a time, and without adequate legislation.

The most advanced town planning legislation has been passed by the legislatures of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Alberta, and in a secondary sense by Ontario. The character and scope of the Acts of these provinces will be alluded to later. In regard to housing, the legislation of Quebec and Ontario shows most advance and the practical outcome of the latter has been to enable the Toronto Housing Company to carry out useful and admirable housing experiments. The work of Mr. G. Frank Beer in that connection has been very valuable and likely to be of great public service in the future. There is great need for the application of the Provincial Act in Montreal and Quebec, and of the Ontario Act in Ottawa and Hamilton, but no action has been taken up to the present.

Progress During 1914

I now come to the work of the Commission in connection with town planning and housing during the past year. Between January and May, 1914, the Committee on Town Planning Legislation completed the preparation of the first Draft Town Planning Act. A great deal of thought and time was given to the draft and the Commission owed a debt of gratitude to the late Lieut.-Col. Jeffrey H. Burland for his services in the matter. The draft was completed in time for the International Town Planning Conference, which was held in Toronto in May last. It was submitted to the conference for discussion, and appeared to meet with approval as regards general principles. It was suggested, however, by delegates from the West that their conditions differed from those in the East, and required different treatment, and also that municipalities should have larger powers of jurisdiction under the proposed Act.

Since May, 1914, the matter has been further considered and a revised draft has been prepared, after consultation with Mr. F. H. Gisborne, parliamentary counsel.

International Conference at Toronto

The Conference held at Toronto in May last was attended by a large number of delegates from Canada and the United States and a few representatives from England. The Commission of Conservation was the host. It was opened by H.R.H. the Duke of Connaught. The address delivered on that occasion by His Royal Highness, and the address of welcome, are printed as an appendix to this report.* Papers were submitted as follows :

1. Basic Principles of Waterfront Development as Illustrated by the Plans of the Toronto Harbour Commissioners, by Robert S. Gourlay.
2. Certain Aspects of Municipal Financing and City Planning, by Andrew Wright Crawford.
3. Progress of the Year in City Planning, by Flavel Shurtleff.
4. Protecting Residential Districts, by Lawrence Veiller and others.
5. A Canadian Town Planning Act : Consideration of Principles and Procedure, by Lieut.-Col. Jeffrey H. Burland and Dr. Hodgetts.
6. Canada as a Field for the Garden City Movement, by G. Trafford Hewitt.
7. Provision for Rapid Transit : Subway, Elevated or Open Cut, and their Influence on the City Plan, by J. V. Davies, John A. McCollum and the Hon. George McAneny.
8. Rapid Transit and the Auto Bus.
9. The Size and Distribution of Playgrounds and Similar Recreation Facilities in American Cities, by Professor H. V. Hubbard.

Addresses were also delivered by the Hon. George McAneny, Acting Mayor of New York, and by Frederick Law Olmsted, and I took part in the discussion on the draft Town Planning Act.

The conference closed with a banquet, presided over by the Chairman of the Commission of Conservation, at which the following speakers gave addresses : Hon. Martin Burrell, Minister of Agriculture ; Hon. W. J. Hanna, K.C., Ontario ; Hon. George McAneny, New York ; Hon. George Langley, Saskatchewan ; Mr. J. L. McCarthy, Toronto, and myself.

The conference resulted in drawing a large amount of public attention to the subject of town planning, and in arousing interest in it on the part of many public men in Canada. Both in regard to the number of delegates and the practical nature of the discussions the conference was one of the most successful so far held on this continent.

* See Appendix I.

Town Planning Exhibition

In connection with the conference a town planning and housing exhibition was held in the Convocation Hall of Toronto University. Plans, drawings and diagrams were collected from many Canadian cities, a number of cities in the United States and from other countries, including Great Britain and Germany. The exhibition gave a striking illustration of the activities of cities in Canada, and some of the plans exhibited, including those from Calgary, Toronto and Winnipeg, showed that bodies of citizens in these growing centres had incurred considerable expenditure in preparing schemes for their future development. The exhibition was opened by H.R.H. the Duke of Connaught, and during the conference week it attracted large numbers of citizens.

Town Planning Adviser

In July last it was decided to take steps to create a Town Planning Branch of the Commission and to appoint a town planning adviser. My appointment to that position was made about the end of July, and I took up my duties in October. To some extent the great conflict in Europe, in which Canada is so deeply interested and involved, is unfortunately interfering with the opportunities which were formerly open to promote town planning and housing reform in the Dominion. But it is nevertheless desirable that the work already begun by the Commission in giving publicity to town planning, in investigating housing and municipal conditions and in promoting legislation to deal with both matters, should not be suspended even during this critical and difficult time. The absence in Europe of Dr. Hodgetts is regrettable from the point of view of the extension of the work, but every effort is being made to secure that the public health activities of the Commission will suffer as little as possible from the temporary loss of the services of its medical adviser.

Present an Opportune Time

There are strong grounds, however, on which it may be claimed that this is an appropriate time to carry out the preparatory work in connection with town planning and housing reform. The incoming stream of immigration has practically ceased to flow, thereby temporarily suspending urban expansion ; we are face to face with a period of slump in real estate, and are free from the injurious effects of gambling in fictitious land values which characterizes periods of boom ; and we have presented to us in an unusual degree the evils of haphazard development of land and bad housing conditions, which show at their worst during periods of slackened employment. If only sufficient attention can be diverted to the subject on the part of public men, no time could be more appropriate for getting to work.

In England there appears to be no slackening in connection with the application of the Act of 1909. In October, 1914, no less than 137 local authorities in Greater London considered the desirability of proceeding with the work of preparing a scheme for main arterial roads for 1,000 square miles of area, and the decision of these representatives was that the work should be continued. The Local Government Board of England has also strengthened its town planning staff since the war began. In connection with housing, one of the first measures passed by Parliament in Great Britain after the beginning of the war was an act to make available a sum of $20,000,000 for housing purposes.

Scope of Commission's Efforts

The work of the Commission in connection with town planning and housing may be summarized as follows :

1. Consideration and investigation of the twin subjects of town planning and housing as a special Canadian problem, regard being had to the experience of other countries.

2. Consideration of the questions of remedying and altering existing bad conditions in towns and cities and the best methods of avoiding the repetition of these conditions in the future. Both remedial and preventive measures have to be devised and incorporated in draft legislation. These measures have to be considered concurrently, but different courses of treatment have to be designed for each.

3. Further consideration of the draft Town Planning Act, in conference with provincial and municipal authorities, especially in regard to the kind of provincial and municipal machinery required for its administration.

4. Preparation of a new Housing Act as a model for provincial legislatures after further investigation into housing conditions.

5. In connection with the above matters visits will require to be made to the different provinces and many of the cities in the Dominion to discuss points which have to be considered in regard to their local or provincial application. Incidentally, these visits will be used as an opportunity for giving advice to municipalities with regard to local schemes and with regard to work which they can do without waiting for legislation.

6. Advice will be given to municipalities and owners of land with respect to town planning and housing, and in that connection a collection is being made of literature, maps, photographs and slides so that these could be placed at the disposal of those able to make use of them.

Town Planning Legislation in Canada

The present position in the various provinces in regard to town planning and housing legislation is as follows :

Nova Scotia

A Town Planning Act was passed on May 3, 1912.* This Act was framed on the basis of Part II of the British Act of 1909, but differs from the latter in important respects. It gives any city, town or municipality the right to prepare a scheme without application to a central authority, except that where land in the area of one local authority is included in the scheme of another local authority the scheme will not come into force unless it has been approved by the Governor in Council. The procedure regulations are also to be prepared by the city, town or municipality and not by a provincial authority. Clause 14 is a housing clause and provides that the council may cause a company to be formed for the erection of houses and may guarantee the bonds of the said company up to one-half of the capital required for the enterprise. It may similarly guarantee the bonds of any company applying for authority to prepare a town planning scheme which shall include the erection of houses. Steps are being taken in Nova Scotia to amend the Act, and I have concluded arrangements to visit Halifax and confer with the Government on this subject during the coming month.

Halifax City Charter : This charter contains sections relating to an official city plan and provides *inter alia* for the preparation of a plan of the city showing the lines of existing and projected streets, and public notice of the completion of the plan has to be given. After confirmation it shall be binding, and no person shall open or lay out any street or make any extension of an existing street, not shown on the plan, without the consent of the council.

Up to the present no action appears to have been taken in Nova Scotia, but the powers given under the provincial Act and the Halifax city charter together form the most advanced legislation in the Dominion.

New Brunswick

A Town Planning Act was passed April 20, 1912.† This Act conforms more strictly to the British precedent than the Nova Scotia Act. The Government, or, in other words, the Lieutenant-Governor in Council of the Province, takes the place of the Local Government Board in the British Act. Clause 5 is new and provides that the manner of

*Quoted in full in the *Fourth Annual Report* of the Commission of Conservation, page 206.

†Quoted in full in the *Fourth Annual Report* of the Commission of Conservation, page 210.

obtaining the funds necessary for carrying the scheme into effect must be defined. The responsible authority preparing the scheme must obtain the consent of each local authority in control of the area affected, before it can make any assessment upon any city, town, parish or county, or before it can borrow money. No action appears to have been taken in New Brunswick under the above Act up to the present time.

Quebec

Town Planning: There is no Town Planning Act in Quebec.

Housing: An Act has been passed to assist in the construction of dwelling-houses in cities, towns and villages.* This Act provides that the council of any municipality may guarantee the loans of a company formed for the purpose of erecting dwelling-houses. It must be proved that additional houses are required and the dividend declared on the capital stock must not exceed six per cent. The by-law respecting the loan must be approved by the municipal electors having a right to vote on money by-laws, except in Quebec or Montreal in which a by-law is only required to be approved by a two-thirds vote of the council or Board of Commissioners. The amount of the loan which may be guaranteed shall not exceed 85 per cent of the value of lands or houses. No action has yet been taken to use the powers conferred by this Act. There are several cities in Quebec province, including those of Montreal and Quebec, where it appears desirable that additional housing accommodation should be provided for the working classes under this Act. Housing companies should be formed in these cities to put the Act into operation.

Ontario

Town Planning: No Town Planning Act has been passed, but certain powers are given to the Municipal and Railway Board under *The City and Suburbs Plan Act*,† Chap. 43, 2 Geo. V, to supervise the subdivision of land within five miles of a city having a population of not less than 50,000 inhabitants. The Act is of comparatively small value in securing the proper planning of even the few cities to which it applies.

Housing: The *Act to Encourage Housing Accommodation in Cities and Towns* was assented to on May 6, 1913.‡

---

*Quoted in full in the *Fifth Annual Report* of the Commission of Conservation, page 239.

†Quoted in full in the *Fourth Annual Report* of the Commission of Conservation, page 220.

‡Quoted in full in the *Fifth Annual Report* of the Commission of Conservation, page 245.

The Act corresponds to and was passed prior to that of the Quebec Legislature, which I have just described.

The Toronto Housing Company has been formed to operate under this Act, and has successfully carried through two important housing schemes, regarding which a full report* was submitted by Mr. G. Frank Beer at the fifth annual meeting of the Commission. The value of the company's work will be as much in providing an object lesson in house-building as in providing houses where they are much needed. There is pressing need for additional housing accommodation at rents within the reach of the working classes of Ottawa and it is desirable that a Housing Company should be formed in the capital city to operate under this Act.

Manitoba Saskatchewan Alberta

No Act has been passed in Manitoba, but a draft Act has been prepared to be submitted to the Provincial Parliament in February, 1915, by the Greater Winnipeg Town Planning Commission.

There is no Town Planning Act in existence in Saskatchewan, but power is vested in the Highway Board to control subdivisions.

A Town Planning Act was passed in Alberta on March 25, 1913.† This Act generally conforms to the New Brunswick Act, but the Minister of Municipal Affairs has been given powers similar to those vested in the Lieutenant-Governor in Council under the New Brunswick legislation.

British Columbia

No Town Planning Act has been enacted, but the inspector of municipalities, recently appointed under the Municipal Department of the province, has certain powers of supervision which, however, do not extend to approving subdivisions of land. Certain powers of approving surveys of building lots are given to the city engineers and mayors of municipalities, but these can hardly be regarded as exceeding ordinary by-law powers in other provinces.

Action Taken by Canadian Municipalities

In addition to the above legislative powers gradually being obtained in the different provinces, independent action has been taken in several cities.

Montreal : In Montreal, as previously reported by Dr. Hodgetts, there has been a City Improvement League in existence for some

---

* See the *Fifth Annual Report* of the Commission of Conservation, page 116.

† Quoted in full in the *Fifth Annual Report* of the Commission of Conservation, page 249.

time, and efforts have been made to secure a plan for the city and the island. Chiefly as a result of its efforts, the Quebec Legislature, in 1910, appointed a Commission to enquire into the need for such a plan and the Commission recommended the appointment of a Metropolitan Park Commission to prepare and to execute plans for a greater Montreal. Later, a joint Social Survey Commission was formed to compile statistics and survey of the needs and conditions of Montreal. Up to the present, however, no definite result has been obtained in connection with these movements.

It is desirable that the powers and name of the Park Commission should be revised so as to make it a Town Planning Commission for the purpose of considering the whole question of preparing a comprehensive scheme for Greater Montreal.

Ottawa : A Town Planning Commission was appointed by the Federal Government in 1913 to prepare a plan for "a greater Ottawa." The report of this Commission is about to be submitted to Parliament. The Ottawa Improvement Commission continues its work of improving the park system of Ottawa.

Winnipeg : The Greater Winnipeg Town Planning Commission was created by the Board of Control of Winnipeg early in 1914 and takes the place of a previous commission appointed in 1911. It is preparing a plan for an area comprising 200 square miles, and is interesting itself in proposals for town planning legislation. I am in correspondence with Prof. Stoughton, the professional adviser of the Commission, with regard to the form of the proposed act.

Selkirk : The Board of Trade of the town of Selkirk (3,500 inhabitants) has had a scheme prepared. It appears to be limited in application to the developed area of the town. It has been approved by the municipal council and the Canadian Pacific railway, and an endeavour is being made to secure funds to purchase some of the lands required to carry it out.

Edmonton, Calgary, Berlin and Brantford : Plans have been prepared for these cities and their environs, but no definite steps have been taken to give them practical effect. The report prepared for the Calgary City Planning Commission was only submitted in April, 1914. The report is well produced and the Commission seems to have spared no expense or effort in investigating their local conditions and in having a scheme prepared for the future development of the city. The Brantford report has just been completed.

Banff : The Dominion Parks Branch has obtained plans for the lay-out of Banff, and has consulted me with regard to the plans and

methods of carrying them out. For this purpose I have paid a short visit to Banff, and have arranged to pay an extended visit in the late spring with a view to making some recommendations to the Parks Commissioner.

Vancouver : The Civic Centre Committee of Vancouver recently promoted a competition for designs for a civic centre. I acted as assessor and made my award after a visit to Vancouver in December. I have also submitted a report on the planning of "greater Vancouver" to the Committee and have recommended that steps should be taken to prepare a topographical map of the large area included in the municipalities of Vancouver, Point Grey, New Westminster, and North and South Vancouver. The report is printed in the January issue of *Conservation of Life*. See Illustration facing page 168.

Toronto : A Toronto-Hamilton Highway Commission has been appointed by the Ontario Legislature to carry out a scheme for constructing a new road from Toronto to Hamilton. The Commission has appointed Mr. W. A. McLean, Provincial Highway Commissioner, Prof. Laing of Toronto University, and myself as an Advisory Committee. I have attended three conferences at Toronto with regard to this matter. There could be no better way to utilize labour which is temporarily unemployed than in carrying out improvements of this kind, especially when these improvements are part of a well-defined scheme. See Illustration facing page 158.

Educational Work Undertaken

In addition to several private conferences which have been attended, meetings have been addressed as follows during the past two months :

Toronto, Ontario—Meeting of Toronto Housing Company.

Berlin, Ontario—Public meeting.

Washington, U.S.A.—Three addresses at conferences of American Civic Association, and American Institute of Architects, one at meeting of Federation of Women's Clubs, and one at public meeting.

Vancouver, B.C.—One address to Canadian Club and two under auspices of Civic Centre Committee.

Victoria, B.C.—Address at public meeting.

Montreal, Quebec—Address at Canadian Club.

In these addresses it has been necessary to emphasize the fact tnat town planning is concerned with all matters connected with the life and growth of a city and that the main object of the town plan should be to promote sound and healthy conditions in connection with its business life and the housing of its citizens.

It is desirable to continue and to extend educational work by means of public lectures and addresses, but it will be necessary to avoid taking up too much time in that direction, in view of the great need there is for giving practical help and technical advice to those in authority in civic affairs. In a sense the latter is the more important duty, although it needs the assistance of the former to make it effective. The education of the public should be carried out by practical demonstrations of town planning as well as by theoretical teaching, and with that end in view it is desirable to get as many local authorities and town planning commissions as possible at work, on the right lines, without any unnecessary delay, and to push forward the legislative proposals of the Commission. A great deal of publicity work could be arranged to be done through local lecturers, and I think we might, with advantage, set up some organization for that purpose in the near future.

Material has been prepared for a special town planning and housing issue of *Conservation of Life*, published this month, and several articles have been written for other publications with the object of educating the public with regard to the right view of town planning.

Collection of Maps and Reports

The following recommendation was submitted at the last annual meeting of the Commission by the Committee on Public Health :

> "That this Commission, having in view the large amount of technical information required for the use of those interested in questions of housing and town planning, and believing that the same should be properly collected and made easily obtainable everywhere in Canada, arrange at once for the elaboration of the information now on hand and provide for its extension along the most practical lines."

In pursuance of this resolution, which was adopted at the meeting, we have been continuing to add to the collection begun by Dr. Hodgetts. Since October last a large number of topographical and other maps and about fifty city planning reports have been collected.

Advice to Municipalities

With regard to the work which should be taken in hand during the current year, consideration has to be given to the difficulties created by the war, and to the financial stringency which exists in the Dominion in connection with municipal affairs. As already stated, this is a good time to prosecute the work of investigation which should precede town planning and housing legislation, all the more so because of the inactivity in building operations. In the course of carrying on

that work, numerous opportunities will arise for giving advice to municipalities and for educating public opinion by means of work which can be done in this direction alone, and the chief consideration will be to do that which is most useful. Municipalities have to be persuaded that proper town planning will result in true economy, and it is part of the work of the Commission to give guidance and information on this point.

Exhibitions of Plans, Etc.

The work of education will be greatly facilitated and assisted when the Commission has completed its collection of maps, plans, diagrams, etc. A series of diagrams should be prepared, illustrating Canadian conditions. When complete the collection might be permanently housed in Ottawa with such local plans and maps as can be brought together. Arrangements could then be made to lend the collection to the various cities and towns in Canada, and the main collection could be supplemented in each place by local maps, prints and diagrams. I have reason to believe that such an exhibit would be welcomed by the councils of several cities and towns and that they would give space for hanging the collection in the city halls.

National Conference

Among the proposals which were agreed to at the fifth annual meeting of this Commission was one relating to the organizing of an annual Town Planning and Housing Conference under the auspices of the Commission. The question of whether such a conference should be held in Ottawa during the present year is under consideration.

The revised draft of the Town Planning Act is now complete and is being submitted to the provincial legislatures in its approved form. Conferences are being arranged in the different provinces to discuss such amendments or alterations as may be necessary to make the draft conform to local conditions and legal requirements.

Housing Conditions and Legislation

In connection with housing, the investigation and study of housing conditions in the Dominion is a matter requiring urgent attention. We need to prepare a draft Housing Act, but before its final form can be settled much information will be required regarding existing conditions. Consideration is being given to the desirability of promoting a housing survey in the largest cities and towns. Such a survey would only be successful in securing adequate information if it included investigation into the methods of subdividing and promoting the sale of real estate, and also into the method of valuing land for purpose of assessment. We have before us the British precedent

for such an investigation, where the difficulties and cost of making it were much greater than they would be in Canada, and where, in order to arrive at the right conclusions regarding town planning and housing reforms, enquiry had to be made into questions of land tenure, rating and valuation, as well as that of suburban transit. The British investigation was completed last year by a special Committee appointed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The schedule prepared by that committee as the basis for enquiry could easily be adapted to suit an enquiry here, and no doubt assistance could be obtained before we recommend legislation to the provincial governments rather than after we do so, and it is desirable that it should be carried out during a period of temporary depression such as we have now. I understand that the Conservation Committee of the National Council of Women, and other bodies, would be glad to co-operate in such work, and perhaps some assistance might be obtained from the Survey Department of the Russell Sage Foundation of New York.

Adjusting Land Values

One of the chief difficulties in improving conditions and securing rational town planning will arise from the system of selling, developing and assessing suburban land which prevails in some parts of the Dominion, and which in the matter of feverish speculation has no parallel in the older countries. Apart from that difficulty, our problem should be a comparatively simple one to deal with. The difference between the value of subdivided land in the suburbs and adjacent agricultural land is greater in comparatively small towns on this continent than in more crowded and rapidly growing towns in Great Britain. Such high values encourage unhealthy conditions and tend to create and maintain slums. They help to lower production by keeping large areas of good farming land in idleness round the fringes of towns, and by attracting men off the land during periods of boom. The original owners of the land do not benefit as a whole from these high values as it means that the money which is available for investment in land is invested in restricted areas, and a large proportion goes into the pockets of speculators having no permanent interest in the use of the land. Nor does the benefit of these high values often accrue to those upon whom the heavy burden of local taxation ultimately falls, for the persons or corporations which really benefit get rid of their interest before they are called upon to meet the obligations which follow the subdivision of real estate. The question of the valuation of subdivided land in the suburbs for rating purposes is rendered complex and difficult and the provision of improved and extended means of transit round cities and towns is

discouraged. On all grounds the matter is one which should be the subject of careful enquiry.

Departments of Municipal Affairs

At the last annual meeting it was resolved to recommend each Provincial Government to create a department of municipal affairs corresponding with certain branches of the Local Government Board of Great Britain, whereby the best expert advice would be placed at the disposal of municipalities, and expenditure on municipal projects and improvements would be subject to approval of a central provincial department. There are departments of municipal affairs in Alberta, Manitoba and Saskatchewan. The reports of the departments show that they are filling a great need in the municipal administration of the three provinces. In other provinces a system of oversight of municipal affairs has been inaugurated without the organized machinery of a special government department, and the general tendency is towards the setting up of such machinery.

The Local Government Boards of England, Scotland, and Ireland have become essential parts of the municipal administration in Great Britain. These Boards give local finance a security it could not otherwise have ; they authorize loans and employ skilled inspectors to guide and advise in regard to local improvements, water supply, sewerage, town planning, housing, etc. Many mistakes and wasteful expenditure would result without this assistance and oversight by the department. All by-laws relating to streets, buildings and sanitation have to be approved by the Board, and alterations can only be made subject to their approval. Such alterations are always made on principle and never on the ground of local expediency. Instead of being an interference with local administration, this system in effect gives added powers to municipalities. So long as a municipality is entirely independent its powers have to be curtailed and its discretion limited, but when its work is subject to the approval of a central department its powers can be greatly increased.

Since 1909 the powers of the English and Scotch Boards have been extended to deal with town planning under Part II of the Housing and Town Planning Act. The supervision of the Board is necessary under the Act to secure practical and effective co-operation between adjacent authorities, to provide facilities for arbitration and to enable wide discretionary powers to be given to municipalities which Parliament would refuse to give in the absence of central control.

Departments of Municipal Affairs are needed in the provinces of Canada to secure uniformity of administration and procedure, the employment of skilled advisers, the linking up of public health,

housing, highway, boundary extension and town planning administration, the proper control of public utilities, the framing and application of sanitary and other by-laws on sound principles, wider powers to municipalities and the efficient and impartial presentation of municipal accounts.

A special committee should be formed by this Commission to frame a draft act which can be submitted to the provincial governments as a model. This is a matter of considerable importance in Canada, especially at the time of difficulty in connection with municipal finance, and in view of the proposed legislation on town planning and housing.

Municipal Activity Pending the Passing of Legislation

Pending the passing of legislation to facilitate the preparation of town planning schemes there is certain work that can be done by municipalities or bodies of citizens interested in the proper development of their cities. Steps are being taken to persuade municipalities to proceed with this work. Before indicating its nature it is necessary to explain why it is limited to a comparatively small, although very important field. It is not desirable that municipalities or commissions representing groups of municipalities should prepare [illegible]ns without first obtaining authority to control the area proposed to be planned, during the time the scheme is being prepared. Power for this purpose is necessary whether it be obtained by a special act to meet the particular case or by a general act for the whole province, such as is being suggested by the Commission. Many cities, particularly in the United States, have had town planning reports and plans prepared at considerable cost and have been disappointed to find, after the work was done, that it was almost impossible to put the proposals into practice. This may not have been due to any defect in the proposals themselves, but to the fact that the schemes were prepared without the municipality first having obtained power to carry them out and without regard having been paid to the cost and how it could be met. When the right steps are taken and the right order of procedure is followed, it is quite practicable to settle the financial details of the scheme during its preparation, and it has to be borne in mind that every scheme must be capable of being tested from the point of view of its economic soundness. It is not a question of sacrificing ideals or principles ; that need not follow and it is a separate matter. It is a question of the simple necessity of justifying whatever proposals are made on their feasibility from a financial standpoint.

This requires that all town planning schemes, when prepared, should be accompanied by estimates of the cost of carrying them out. To accomplish that result means that the process of preparing a scheme has to proceed along certain definite lines in conformity with legal practice and that the co-operation of owners of land has to be sought before the scheme is completed and not after it is made. Moreover, it requires that owners shall not have the power to defeat or contravene a scheme while it is in course of preparation.

The preparation of a practical scheme along these lines involves four stages of procedure, as follows :

1. Preliminary survey to determine area and obtain map of existing sociological and physical conditions.

2. Obtaining authority to control the area during preparation of the scheme so as to prevent anything being done to contravene it or any speculation in values likely to be created by it.

3. Preparing scheme and getting approval by or on behalf of the Legislature.

4. Operating the scheme after it has been approved.

Preliminary Surveys Essential

In a democratic country it is necessary to proceed in the above order and only the first stage can be carried out without legislation. Reasons for this method of procedure are being fully set out in a memorandum which is being prepared for circulation to the municipalities throughout the Dominion, but sufficient has been said to show that the scope for municipal activity pending the passing of legislation is practically limited to preparing a preliminary survey and map of existing conditions.

The preparation of such a map is urgent and of great importance. The customary blue-print showing the streets and subdivisions, and not even differentiating between portions built upon and vacant land, is of little value for town planning purposes. The need is for a printed map showing accurately the following details :

1. Existing and approved streets, footpaths and fences, differentiating between those streets actually formed or made and those which have been simply approved by the council.

2. Buildings erected and in course of erection, distinguishing between public buildings, factories, residences, etc.

3. Railways, canals, and other artificial features.

4. Lakes, streams, marshy land, groups of trees and other natural features.

In short, what is required is a map showing the existing development and general physical character of the area in the same way as this is shown on the ordnance survey maps in Great Britain.* The need for such maps for Canadian cities and their environs is all the more necessary because of the extent to which land has been subdivided beyond the limits of built-upon areas of most cities.

With regard to levels, all that is necessary on the preliminary survey map is to show spot levels at frequent intervals along the existing roads, or perhaps along streams and on high elevations. Contour maps, showing precise intervals of level every 5, 10, 25 or more feet, are not necessary at this stage, although in undulating areas they will be required when the scheme comes to be prepared. In any case, the contours shown on the Militia maps (one inch to one mile) at vertical intervals of 25 feet are sufficient for most purposes of general schemes, if transferred to maps prepared on a larger scale. This is a matter which will have to be decided according to local circumstances. When the preliminary survey is completed, copies of the map might usefully be employed to show the distribution of population and of industries and the traffic conditions of the city. All that is work which can be profitably carried out without danger, in advance of legislation, but to go further is to jeopardize any scheme which it is proposed to prepare.

For town planning schemes and for general use, apart from precise engineering purposes, it would suffice if the maps were prepared on a scale of 400 feet to one inch,† so that a comparatively large town could be placed on a map of workable size, but for many purposes a scale of 400 feet to one inch, as has been followed in the case of the Baltimore survey, would be more useful. The small scale map of part of the suburbs of Edinburgh, Scotland, —880 feet to one inch—is a useful map for many purposes, but is not large enough to enable precise areas to be fixed. It shows, however, that even on this small scale the British maps give an almost accurate idea of the character of a district. One of the difficulties in connection with the preparation of such maps is that they require the services of men of special engineering training and experience, and they can only be prepared economically if the work is supervised by some one who has done similar work before. For this reason it would be of great advantage if some practical means were found to enable the Departments of the Dominion Service which are engaged in preparing survey maps to give assistance to municipalities on terms to be mutually arranged. The

* See illustration facing page 172.

† See Cincinnati topographical map, facing page 178.

work could be made to a large extent revenue producing and would be a good investment. In cities in America, where maps have been prepared, it has been shown that they are of great benefit and are worth many times the cost. In Ottawa, I understand, the Federal Plan Commission had to expend about $7,000 for preliminary surveys, most of which would have been unnecessary had an accurate topographical map of Ottawa been in existence.

Preservation of Trees

It is one of the objects of town planning to preserve natural features such as trees, and in the older countries it has become an outstanding feature of real estate development on ordinary commercial lines to preserve trees as a profitable asset in connection with the sale of land. One of the most successful real estate enterprises in the United States is that of Roland Park, Baltimore. I asked the president of the Roland Park Company to inform me whether he placed any commercial value on the preservation of trees, and his reply, dated the 12th inst., is as follows :

"As to the commercial considerations involved in the question of saving trees wherever possible, my own judgment, founded upon an experience of over 20 years in this work, is that those who buy land from us value large forest trees so much that we can afford to go to very considerable expense in preserving them. I send you some photographs showing cases where we have built retaining walls to avoid making slopes which would have destroyed trees located on or near the sides of streets. (See illustration.) With the same purpose in view, we frequently leave the sidewalk at a level above or below that of the driveway. I send you a few photographs illustrating this method of treatment also.

"There are a number of advantages secured by the preservation of such trees : The direct value of the tree to the abutting lot, its value in the enhancement of the beauty and attractiveness of the street vista, and the variety and interest added to the aspect of the street by the evidence furnished by such a construction that a human problem has been encountered here and recognized, and an effort made to work out its solution with some degree of care and thoughtfulness."

I have referred to this matter as I have observed that the point is not appreciated by many who conduct real estate operations in Canada, and even the advisers of the great railway companies who have large areas to deal with appear to lose sight of the commercial advantages of preserving trees, and incur great expense in removing them, to the detriment of their own property. The public loss is still greater, and the matter is one regarding which further education of public opinion is desirable.

HD7305
A3
A6